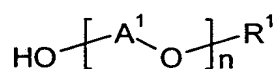
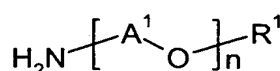


We claim:-

1. A process for the production of leather, wherein pelts, pickled pelts or semifinished products are treated with at least one polymer which is obtainable by copolymerization of
 - at least one ethylenically unsaturated dicarboxylic anhydride (A), derived from at least one dicarboxylic acid of 4 to 8 carbon atoms,
 - at least one vinylaromatic compound (B)
 - and optionally at least one ethylenically unsaturated monomer (C) differing from (A) and having at least one hetero atom, reaction with at least one compound (D) of the formula I a or I b



I a



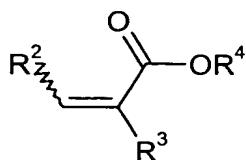
I b

- at least 0.55 equivalent, based on (A), of (D) being used,
- and optionally hydrolysis with water or aqueous alkaline solution,

in formulae I a and I b the variables being defined as follows:

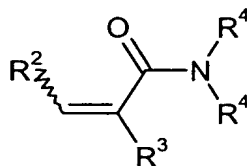
A¹ are identical or different and are C₂-C₆-alkylene
 R¹ is linear or branched C₁-C₂₀-alkyl and
 n is an integer from 6 to 200.

2. A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the polymer is treated with water or aqueous alkaline solution before use.
3. A process as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein (B) is styrene.
4. A process as claimed in any of claims 1 to 3, wherein the molar ratio of (A) to (C) is from 1:0 to 1:10.
5. A process as claimed in any of claims 1 to 4, wherein the molar ratio of (A) to [(B) + (C)] is from 2:1 to 1:20.
6. A process as claimed in any of claims 1 to 5, wherein (C) is selected from ethylenically unsaturated C₃-C₈-carboxylic acid derivatives of the formula II



II

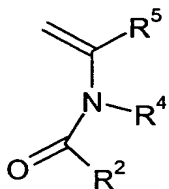
acrylamides of the formula III



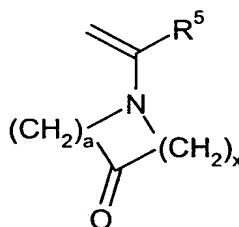
III

5

acyclic amides of the formula IV a or cyclic amides of the formula IV b



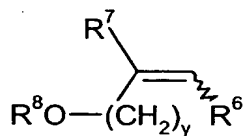
IV a



IV b

10

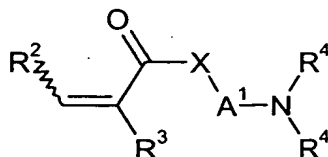
C₁-C₂₀-alkyl vinyl ethers, N-vinyl derivatives of nitrogen-containing aromatic compounds, α,β-unsaturated nitriles, alkoxyated unsaturated ethers of the formula V



V

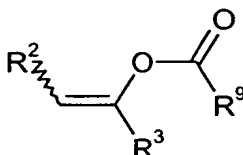
15

esters or amides of the formula VI



VI

unsaturated esters of the formula VII



VII

5

in the formulae the variables being defined as follows:

- R² and R³ are identical or different and are selected from hydrogen and straight-chain and branched C₁-C₁₀-alkyl,
 R⁴ are identical or different and are selected from hydrogen and branched and straight-chain C₁-C₂₂-alkyl,
 R⁵ is hydrogen or methyl,
 x is an integer from 2 to 6,
 y is an integer selected from 0 and 1,
 a is an integer from 0 to 6,
 R⁶ and R⁷ are identical or different and are selected from hydrogen and straight-chain and branched C₁-C₁₀-alkyl,
 X is oxygen or N-R⁴
 R⁸ is [A¹-O]_n-R⁴,
 R⁹ are identical or different and are selected from hydrogen and straight-chain and branched C₁-C₁₀-alkyl
 and the remaining variables are as defined above.

7. A process as claimed in any of claims 1 to 6, wherein the hydrolysis is carried out at from 15 to 100°C.
 8. A process as claimed in any of claims 1 to 7, wherein the polymers are metered as an aqueous dispersion or solution.
 9. A leather produced by a process as claimed in any of claims 1 to 8.

5

10. The use of a leather as claimed in claim 9 for the production of articles of clothing or furniture or automotive parts.
11. An article of clothing, produced from or comprising leather as claimed in claim 9.
12. A piece of furniture produced from or comprising leather as claimed in claim 9.
13. An automotive part produced from or comprising leather as claimed in claim 9.